

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

I. Amendments to the Specification and Abstract

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to improve their English grammar. No new matter has been added.

II. Informalities

Claim 1 was objected in view of various informalities identified on page 2 of the Office Action. Withdrawal of this objection is respectfully submitted since claim 1 has been amended to resolve the problems identified by the Examiner.

III. Amendments to the Claims

Claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Further, independent claims 1, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 have been amended to clarify features of the invention recited therein and to further distinguish the present invention from the references relied upon in the rejections discussed below.

It is also noted that claims 1, 2 and 4-21 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. These editorial revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. Further, these editorial revisions have not been made to narrow the scope of

protection of the claims, or to address issues related to patentability, and therefore, these amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

IV. 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 13, 17, 18 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is believed clearly inapplicable to the pending claims, since claims 1, 2 and 4-21 have been amended to avoid the problems identified by the Examiner and to otherwise comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. As a result, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

V. 35 U.S.C. §101 Rejections

Claims 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for failure to recite statutory subject matter. Specifically, independent claims 14 and 17 were rejected for reciting software alone. Independent claims 14 and 17 have been amended to recite that a program is recorded on a computer-readable recording medium and causes a computer to execute a method. As a result, independent claims 14 and 17 now require more than software and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Specifically, independent claims 18 and 21 were rejected for not being tied to a particular machine or apparatus. Independent claims 18 and 21 have been amended to require a

specific apparatus. As a result, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

VI. 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 4, 9, 12, 17 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kasajima (EP 1160705). Further, claims 3, 5-8, 10, 11, 13-16 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of Kasajima, Matsumoto (U.S. 6,199,755), Rydbeck (U.S. 6,163,693) and Official Notice. These rejections are believed clearly inapplicable to amended independent claims 1, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 and the claims that depend therefrom for the following reasons.

Amended independent claim 1 recites a system comprising a home appliance device connectable to a home network and a management apparatus connected to the home appliance via a network. Further, claim 1 recites that the home appliance device includes a reading unit that automatically reads customer information concerning a customer via the home network from a recording medium included in another home appliance device connected to the home network. Kasajima, Matsumoto, Rydbeck and Official Notice, or any combination thereof fails to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned distinguishing features as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Rather, Kasajima merely teaches that a communication terminal constantly receives attribute information regarding a living facility and equipment connected to a specific network of a house, such that, if there is a change in the received attribute information or if a fixed time has passed (even if there is no change in the received attribute information), then specific individual information D2 is sent to a specific service server 6 that is located outside the house (see

paragraph [0049], as cited in the outstanding Office Action).

Thus, in view of the above, it is clear that Kasajima teaches that, if there is a change in the received attribute information or if a fixed time has passed (even if there is no change in the received attribute information), then specific individual information D2 is sent to a specific service server 6 that is outside the house via an external network, but fails to disclose or suggest the home appliance device and a management apparatus connected to each other, wherein that the home appliance device includes a reading unit that automatically reads customer information concerning a customer via the home network from a recording medium included in another home appliance device connected to the home network, as required by claim 1.

More specifically, even though Kasajima teaches that specific individual information is sent to a service server connected to an external network, Kasajima still fails to disclose or suggest automatically reading customer information from another home appliance device connected to the home network, as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that independent claim 1 and claims 2 and 4-8 that depend therefrom are not anticipated by Kasajima.

Applicants also note that Matsumoto merely teaches that a status of a household appliance is stored in an IC card, and that the household appliance exchanges data including the status of the appliance with a service center using a telephone line (see col. 7, lines 4-11). However, Matsumoto fails to disclose or suggest the home appliance device and a management apparatus connected to each other, wherein that the home appliance device includes a reading unit that automatically reads customer information concerning a customer via the home network from a recording medium included in another home appliance device connected to the home

network, as required by claim 1.

Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that claim 1 and the claims that depend therefrom would not have been obvious or result from any combination of Kasajima and Matsumoto.

Please note that one of the benefits of the structure required by claim 1 is that customer information is transmitted when a new home appliance device is purchased (e.g., connected to the home network), without newly registering the customer information and without a home server. In light of the discussion above, the combination of Kasajima and Matsumoto does not provide the above-mentioned benefits of the structure required by claim 1, because the combination of Kasajima and Matsumoto merely teaches that specific individual information is sent to a service server located outside the house when attribute information is updated or a certain time has passed since the attribute information has been updated and that a status of a household appliance is transmitted to a server (outside the home) via a telephone line.

Amended independent claims 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 are directed to a device, an apparatus, a program, a program, a method and a method, respectively and each recites features that correspond to the above-mentioned distinguishing features of independent claim 1. Thus, for the same reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 and claims 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19 and 20 that depend therefrom are allowable over the prior art of record.

Regarding claims 3, 5-8, 10, 11, 13-16 and 18-20, which were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kasajima in view of various combinations of Matsumoto, Official Notice and Rydbeck (secondary references), it is respectfully submitted that these

secondary references do not disclose or suggest the above-discussed features of independent claims 1, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 which are lacking from the Kasajima reference. Therefore, no obvious combination of Kasajima with any of the secondary references would result in, or otherwise render obvious, the invention recited independent claims 1, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 and claims 2, 4-8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19 and 20 that depend therefrom.

Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Kasajima, Matsumoto, Official Notice and/or Rydbeck or elsewhere in the prior art of record which would have caused a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Kasajima, Matsumoto, Official Notice and/or Rydbeck to obtain the invention of independent claims 1, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 and claims 2, 4-8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19 and 20 that depend therefrom are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

VII. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Noriyuki SHIMIZU

/Andrew L. Dunlap/

By: 2009.07.28 14:13:40 -04'00'

Andrew L. Dunlap
Registration No. 60,554
Attorney for Applicant

ALD/led
Washington, D.C. 20005-1503
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
July 28, 2009